

THE  
SCULPTURED BOSSES  
IN THE ROOF OF THE  
**BAUCHUN CHAPEL**  
OF OUR LADY OF PITY IN  
**Norwich Cathedral.**

DESCRIBED BY  
MONTAGUE RHODES JAMES, LITT. D.,  
*Provost of King's College, Cambridge.*

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY  
W. T. BENSLY, LL.D., F.S.A.,  
*Hon. Treasurer.*

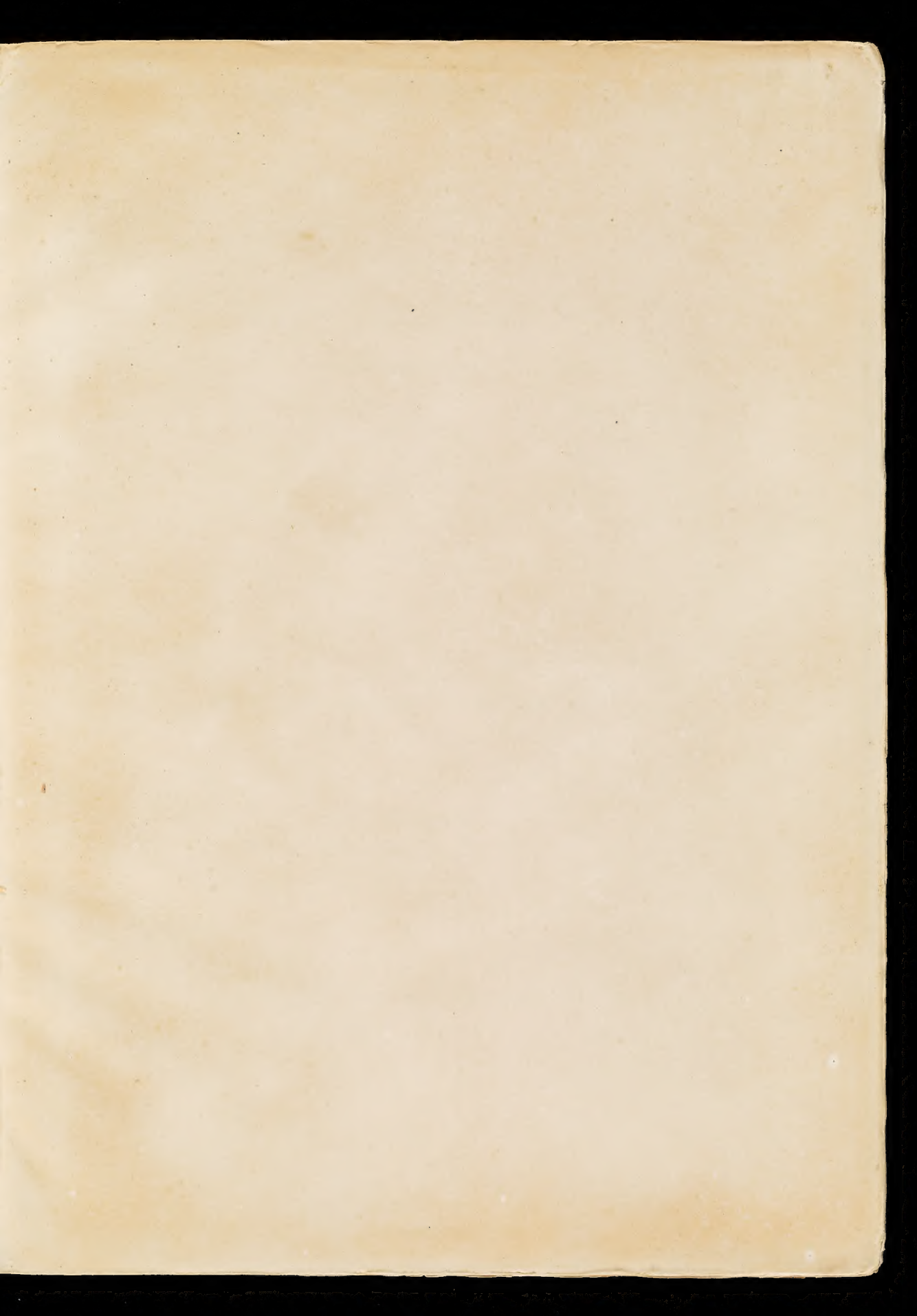


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1908.









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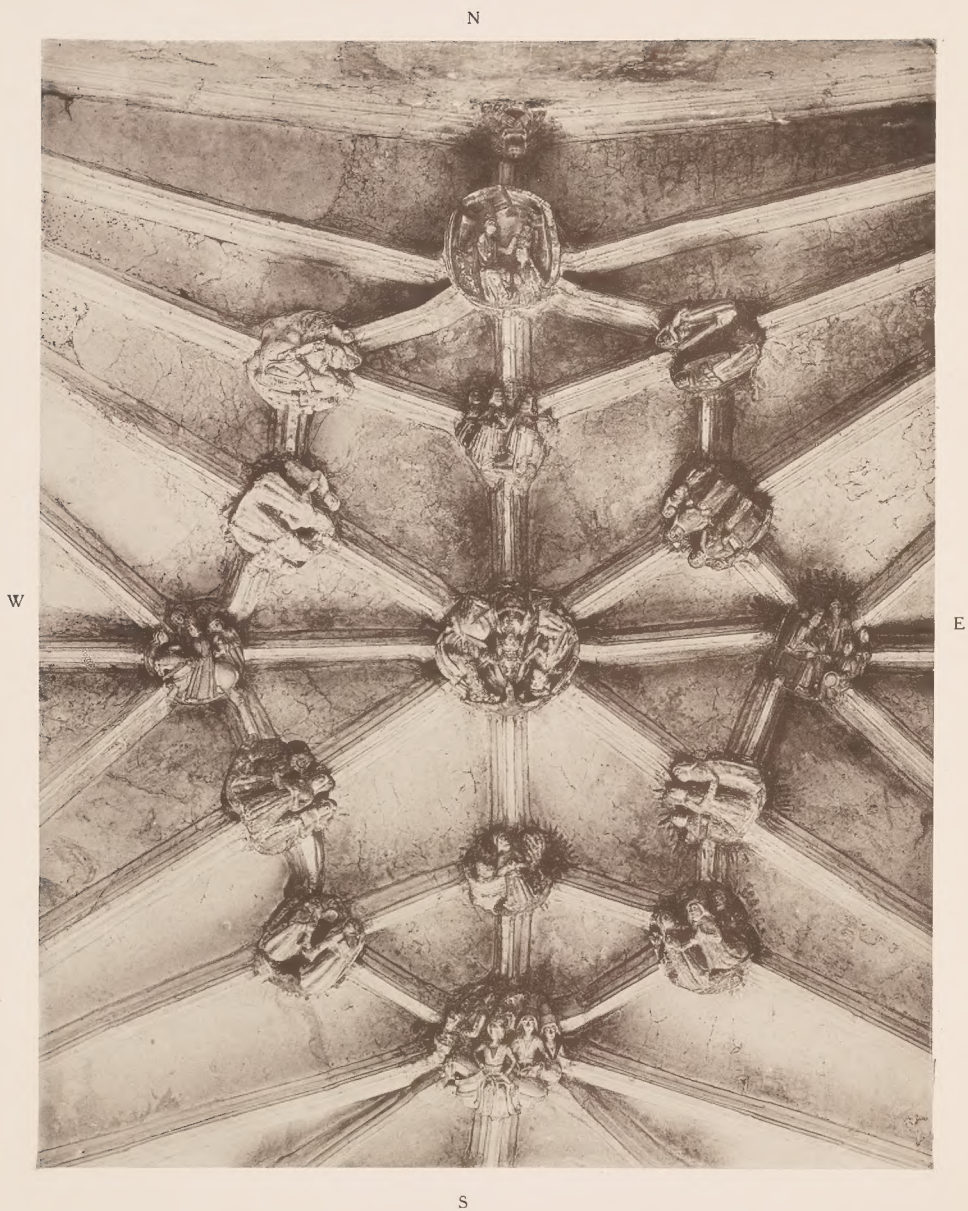
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Sculptured Roof Bosses,  
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## INTRODUCTION.

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THE late Dean of Norwich, the Very Rev. Edward Meyrick Goulburn, D.D., and the Rev. Henry Symonds, M.A., in their valuable book, *On the Ancient Sculptures in the Roof of Norwich Cathedral*, have given an elaborate description, with illustrations, of the sculptures in the roof of the Nave. The book contains brief notices of the sculptured bosses in the roofs of the Transept, Presbytery, and east and south walks of the Cloister: but it contains no reference to the sculptured bosses in the vaulted roof of the Bauchun Chapel. These are of a very interesting character and are fully described and illustrated in the present volume.

Early in the fourteenth century this Chapel was erected on the south side of, and at right angles to, the Cathedral Presbytery; and a corresponding Chapel (now demolished) was built on the north side of the Presbytery. Both of these Chapels were additions to the original Norman plan of the Cathedral.

In the possession of the Earl of Orford is a MS. by Henry Chitting (who was appointed Chester Herald in 1618 and died in 1637), in which are the following words relating to this Chapel and its founder:—

“In a Chappell of the south side next to the Chapter House, on the wall there, In honorem beate Marie Virginis et omnium Sanctorum Willimus Bauchun Capellam hanc ordinavit et ex propriis sumptibus Construxit. He lays there under an Arche in that wall buried: the roof is arched and guilt very faier.”

At a later date, viz., in 1712, the Posthumous works of Sir Thomas Browne, Knt., M.D., were published, containing his Repertorium, or account of the tombs and monuments in the Cathedral Church of Norwich in 1680. The Chapel is there described as a handsome Chapel wherein the Consistory or Bishop's Court is kept, with a noble gilded roof. Sir Thomas states that it may well be called Beauchamp's Chapel, and mentions the inscription in old letters almost obliterated on the outside of the wall at the south side of the Chapel. Unfortunately he read Bauchun as Beauchamp, and Blomefield, the historian of Norfolk, writing at a later date, repeats the mistake.

Simon Wilkin, in his edition of Sir Thomas Browne's works, mentions a note by Kirkpatrick (an eminent local antiquary), that it was certainly William Bauchun who was the founder of this Chapel and gave lands to it in the latter end of King Edward the Second's time, the said William Bauchun being often mentioned in the records of the Church, but William Beauchamp never.

It appears by the Monastic Account Rolls of the Cathedral Priory that William Bauchun held the office of Granarius of the Monastery. The Compoti, or Rolls of Account, of the Granarius, indorsed upon the Rolls of the Master "Celerar," dated 1292 and 1293, bear his name. He may have held the office for many other years. Several subsequent Rolls of the Granarius are extant, but the name of the Granarius is not mentioned in them.

The following extracts from the Rolls of other Obedientiaries of the Monastery have reference to the Chapel or its founder:—

1289. Sacrist. "In stipendio W. Bauchun v<sup>s</sup>."
1324. Pitancer. "Item de domino Priori de argento Bauchun c<sup>s</sup>."
- 1329-30. Pitancer. "Compotus fratris Johannis de Wurthestede de expensis super capellam Willelmi Bauchun . . . Summa totius Recept. ad opus capelle xxxvi<sup>li</sup> xiiij<sup>s</sup> iiij<sup>d</sup> . . . Summa expensarum . . . xlvij<sup>li</sup> xvij<sup>s</sup> iiij<sup>d</sup> ob. Et sic excedunt expense receptum xij<sup>li</sup> iiij<sup>s</sup> ob."
1330. Communar. "Item pro roba Bauchun xvij<sup>s</sup> vj<sup>d</sup>."
1330. Sacrist. "Item recept. de executoribus Wilfridi Baudechoun ad inveniendum vnum cereum ad altare S<sup>c</sup>e Marie dummodo xiiij libre cere durare poterunt vj<sup>s</sup> viij<sup>d</sup>."
1405. Sacrist. "Item in pictura ymaginum in Capella de Bauchon & ad hostiam occidentalem ecclesie xl<sup>s</sup>."
- "Item in duobus Candelabris de ferro Coram ymaginibus in Capella Bauchon v<sup>s</sup>."

In the following extract three Chapels dedicated to St. Mary in the Cathedral are mentioned:—

1516. Sacrist. "Recepta . . . Ad compassionem beate Marie in naui ecclesie vj<sup>s</sup> viij<sup>d</sup> ob. Ad magnam Mariam nihil . . . Ad compassionem beate Marie in Capella Bawchyn iiij<sup>d</sup>."

About the middle of the fifteenth century the steep-pitched roof of the Bauchun Chapel was removed, the walls were raised several feet and a stone vaulted roof added, richly adorned with carved bosses, at the expense, it is believed, of William Sekyngton, LL.B., who was an Advocate in the Consistory Court held in this Chapel and Corrector General of Crimes to Bishop Alnwick. The arms of Seguinton or Sekyngton appear upon two corbels on the south

wall from which the groining springs, viz., on a bend three chevronels, in chief a mullet.

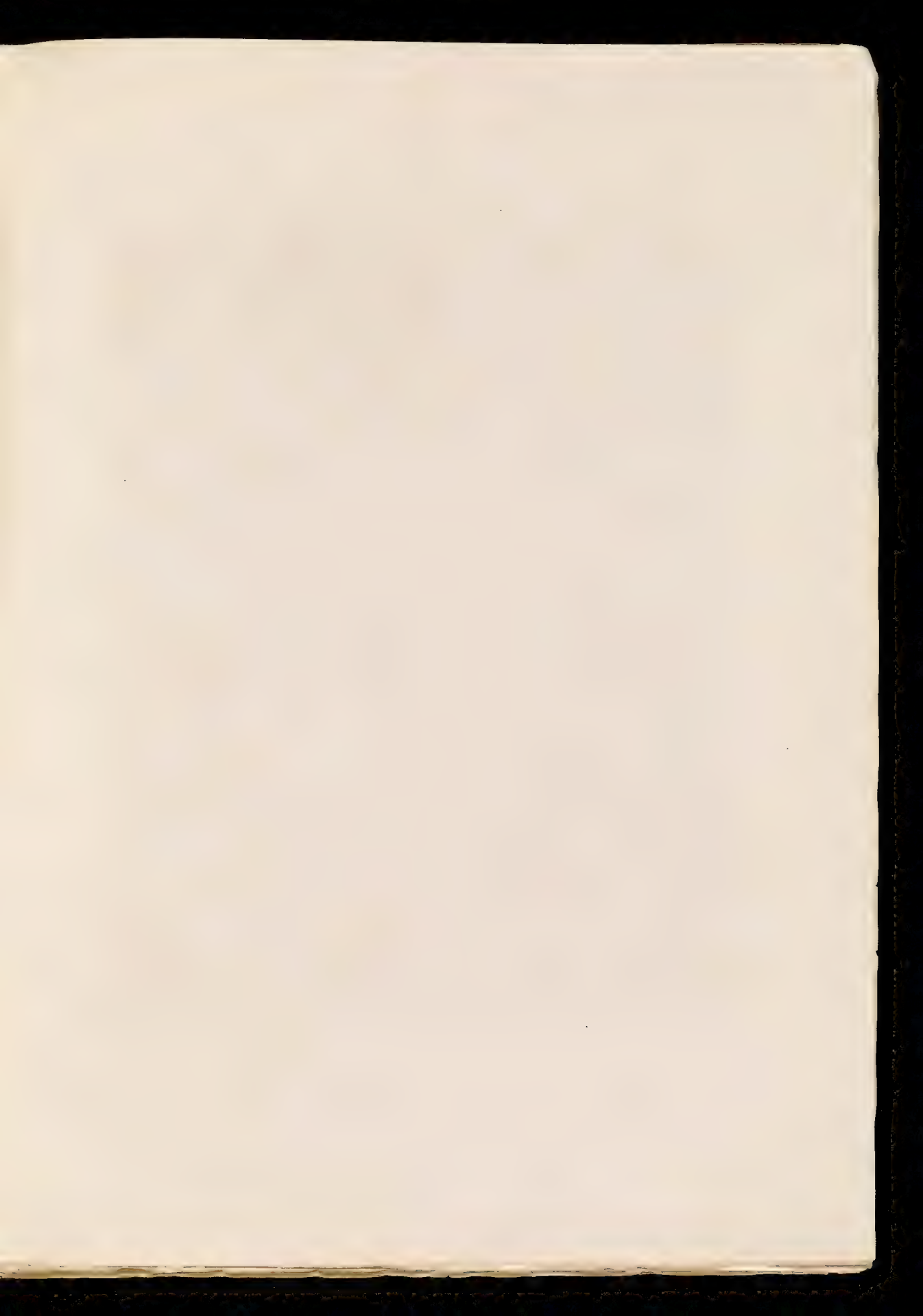
Sekyngton, by his will dated 9th January, 1460, and proved in the Consistory Court of Norwich, 17th March, 1460, directed his body to be buried in the Cathedral Church of the Holy Trinity of Norwich in the Chapel of the Blessed Mary of Pity.

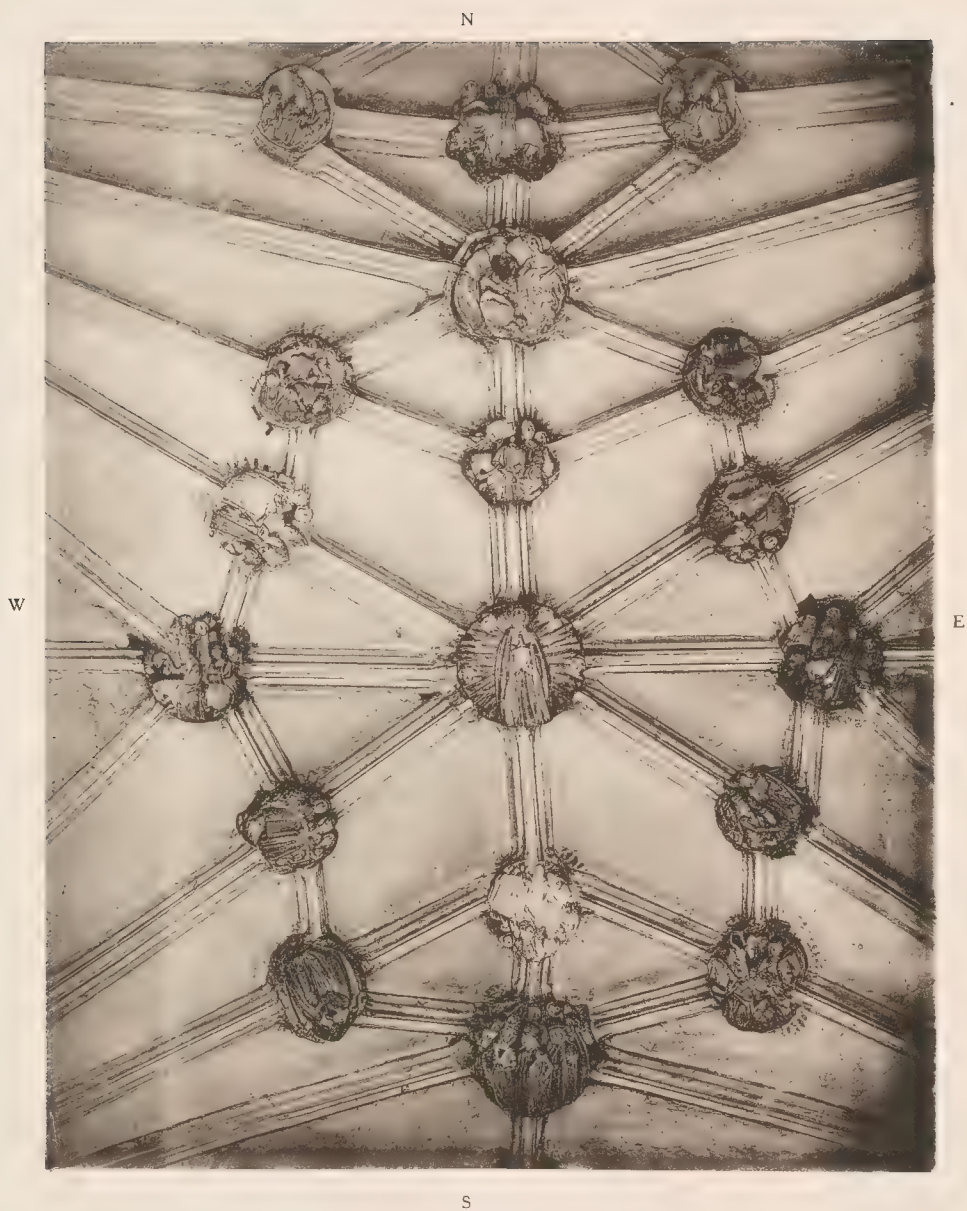
It will be seen that our Lady of Pity, supporting the lifeless body of our Saviour, is represented on one of the corbels on the east side of the Bauchun Chapel over the site of the altar. The corbel opposite to it probably represents William Sekyngton himself kneeling at a desk, with his hands clasped and wearing a coif.











Sculptured Roof Bosses,  
IN THE SOUTH BAY OF THE BAUCHUN CHAPEL.



## DESCRIPTION of the Bosses in the Vaulted Roof of the Bauchun Chapel of our Lady of Pity (used as the Consistory Court), in the Cathedral Church of Norwich.

THE lierne vaulting of the Bauchun Chapel in the Cathedral Church of Norwich is ornamented with a number of bosses sculptured with figure subjects. The general drift of these I have recently been enabled to detect, and propose in these pages to explain it to the best of my ability.

The main subject is the story of an Empress falsely accused and delivered by the help of the Virgin, which is most conveniently to be found in Sir H. Maxwell Lyte's *History of Eton College*, pp. 86—89. He abridged it from the Latin prose form given by Vincent ("of Beauvais") in the *Speculum Historiale* (vi., 91—93).

The reason why the story occurs in so unlikely a place as a *History of Eton College* is that it is represented in the beautiful paintings (now hidden by the stall work) on the walls of the College Chapel.<sup>1</sup>

The tale was a favourite in medieval times, and much has been written about it in folklore journals and periodicals devoted to medieval languages and literature. It occurs in the *Gesta Romanorum* (Ed. Oesterley), p. 648, and it is identical in its main features with Chaucer's *Man of Lawe's Tale*.

Briefly told, it runs as follows:—

An Emperor going to the wars leaves his Empress at home, and his brother to protect her. The brother has already shown signs of a guilty attachment to the Empress, and so she, immediately upon her husband's departure, imprisons him in a tower. The Emperor returns. The brother, released and brought before him, attributes his imprisonment to the wickedness

<sup>1</sup> See a recent publication by the present writer, *The Frescoes in Eton College Chapel* (Messrs. Spottiswoode & Co., Eton, 1907), where a series of drawings of these paintings, made in 1847, is reproduced.

of the Empress, who, he says, had made wicked proposals to him, which he had rejected. He is believed. The Emperor smites his wife on the face and orders his servants to take her into the depths of a forest and kill her there. At the moment when they are about to slay her, a Knight of the neighbourhood comes up with his train, kills the servants, rescues the Empress (not knowing who she is), takes her home and makes her the nurse of his infant son. Misfortune falls on her again. The Knight's brother falls in love with her, but she rejects him. Mad with jealousy he steals into her room at night, cuts the throat of the child, and puts the bloody knife into her hands while she sleeps. Accused of the murder she can only plead ignorance. The Knight, still merciful, does not kill her, but exposes her on a desert island. She prays earnestly to the Virgin; in her sleep the Virgin appears to her, promises her help, and shews her a plant growing on the island which has the power of curing leprosy. She is eventually taken off the island by a passing ship, and comes unrecognised to the abode of her former protector the Knight. She finds that his wicked brother has become a leper. She is entreated to heal him, having already accomplished many cures by means of the miraculous plant. She will only consent to heal him on his full confession. He confesses the false accusations he had made against the nurse. She declares her identity and heals him. She next comes to her husband's court and the same thing happens again. The Emperor's brother is a leper; he too is made to confess his crime; she gives him of the herb and cures him, and then makes herself known to her husband. But she will not consent to take up her old life again: she enters a convent and passes the remainder of her days there.

A short glance at the bosses of the Bauchun Chapel will serve to convince anyone that this story of the Empress forms the main subject of them. To begin with, we see everywhere men and women in tall imperial crowns, really triple crowns like that of the Pope. (The Empress, I may remark, wears hers throughout all her vicissitudes; but this is only in order to help us to recognise her.) But in the third large central boss, counting from the south window (No. 22), we have a scene which serves to identify the story beyond a doubt. In the foreground lies a child with its throat cut. On the left a man is putting a knife into the hands of a sleeping woman, who wears a triple crown. This can be nothing but the scene of the Knight's unprincipled brother trying to fix the guilt of murder on the Empress. The main fact being thus entirely cleared up, we may ascertain if any of the bosses do obviously and at first sight not belong to our story. Of the large central bosses two (Nos. 12 and







Details of the principal Sculptured Roof Bosses,  
IN THE NORTH BAY OF THE BAUCHUN CHAPEL.

36) declare themselves at once as representing the Assumption and Coronation of the Virgin. These are the third and ninth of the central row, counting from the south. To the subject of the Assumption refer also the angels (Nos. 1, 16, 32, and 40), who hold scrolls inscribed *Gaudent Angeli* (from the Antiphon for the Assumption; *Assumpta est Virgo Maria in Coelum: gaudent angeli laetantur Archangeli*. The inscription occurs again on the corbels). To the Coronation belong the figures of angels adoring and playing instruments, which are in some of the lateral bosses (Nos. 27, 38, 39, and 45).

The remaining sculptures all seem at first sight to relate to the story of the Empress; but their order is very difficult indeed to decipher. We must have recourse to a rough diagrammatic plan of the roof, in which the position of the bosses will be indicated by numbers. Next each boss will be shortly described under its number, and then we will see how they can be fitted into the story. We begin our numbering from the south window and note that there are in all forty-seven bosses, and that on two of the vaulting ribs there are lines of bosses going right across from west to east.

DIAGRAM SHOWING THE POSITION OF THE  
SCULPTURED BOSSES.

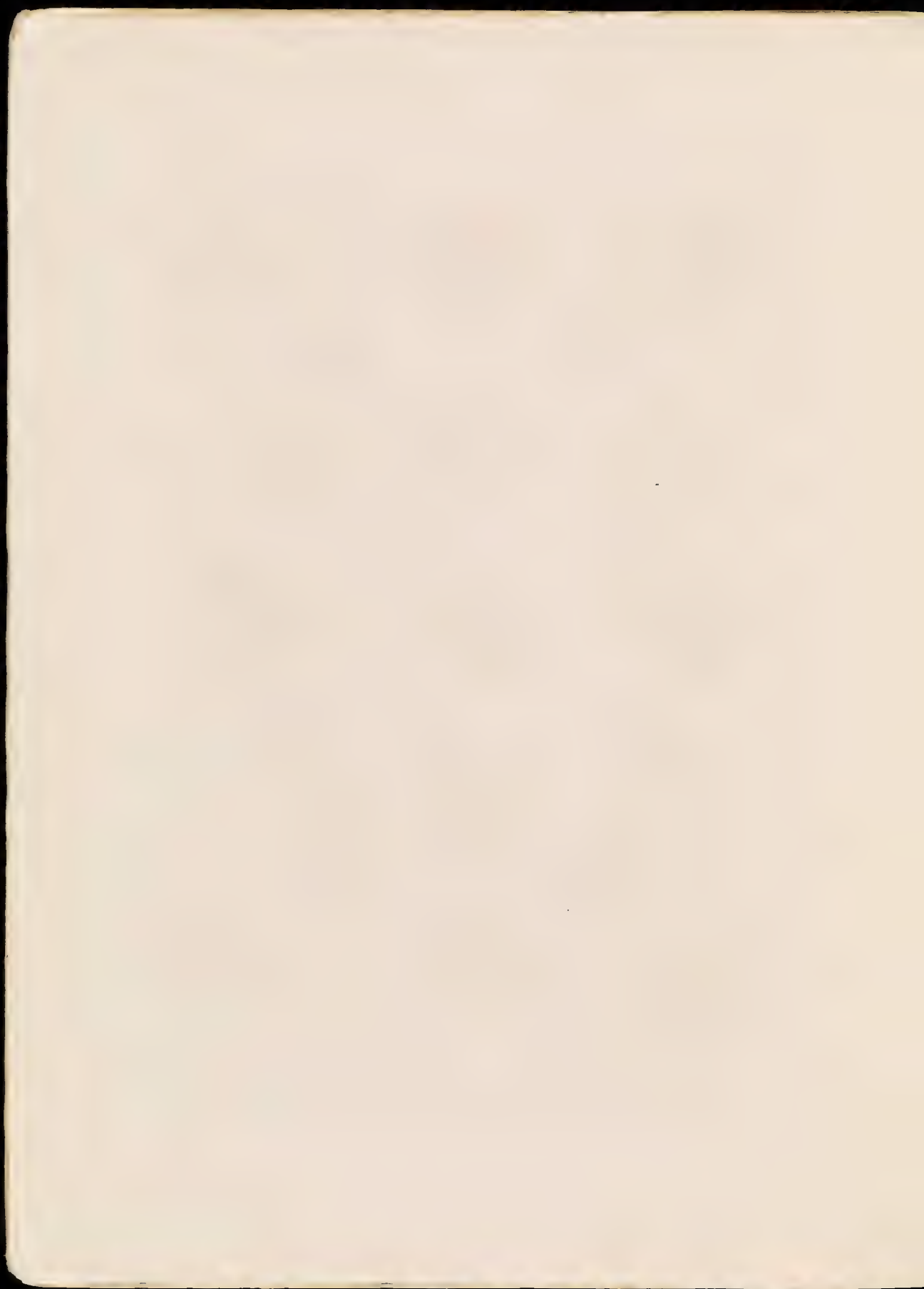
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		43		
		41	42	
32 33 34 35		36	37 38 39 40	
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W.		26		E.
		23	24	25
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8 9 10 11		12	13 14 15 16	
		6	7	
		5		
		3	4	
		2		
		1		
		S.		

1. (Over south window). Angel with scroll, *gaudent angeli*.
2. The Emperor in centre, his arm in that of the Empress (on left); the brother (?) on right; courtiers and ladies.
3. A man whispers to, or kisses, the Empress.
4. Broken figure (Empress ?) on knee; man on right kneels; three people behind.
5. Man in bed nude, with kerchief round his head; the Empress stands over him; attendant crouches in front with jug; a person on each side of the Empress.
6. Empress led by two men; tree on left.
7. Empress kneels and picks leaves, holding a glove to put them in; the Virgin stands on right.
8. Demi-angel with joined hands.
9. Another facing west.
10. Empress kneels to a man; two men on right and left.
11. Empress on horseback facing left, lays her hand on the head of a stooping man; four or five people on right.
12. The Assumption; the Virgin with joined hands surrounded by rays, in which are seen the heads of four angels.
13. Emperor (short haired and girt with sword) on horse facing left; the Empress (?), bare-headed, speaks to him; three other people.
14. Woman and kneeling child (or small figure) on left; kneeling figure facing left, and two women on right.
15. Angel with joined hands facing east.
16. Bust of angel with scroll, *gaudent angeli*.
17. Emperor and Empress married by Bishop in centre; attendants right and left.
18. Empress kneels towards trees on right; men on left.
19. Emperor on horseback (head gone), takes hand of kneeling Empress; attendants behind.
20. Headless figure and Empress with hands spread as in grief, seated together; in front, men in a ship.
21. Empress seated on right. A man (headless) attacks her, clutches her throat. Another assailant holds her hands (?); one on left.
22. Man on left puts a knife into the hands of the Empress in bed; in front lies a child with its throat out.





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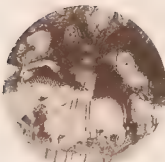




23



24



25



38



39



40



32



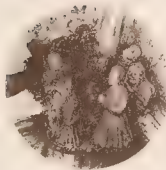
33



34



14



15



16



8



9



10



Details of other Sculptured Roof Bosses,  
IN THE BAUCHUN CHAPEL.



23. Within a raised rim, probably indicating that the scene is in the interior of a house (there is something of the same kind in No. 22), the Empress kneels, facing right; a lady seated on right touches her crown; a woman on left.
24. Headless figure on horseback facing left, takes the hand of a woman; three other men.
25. The Empress on left holding a child; two women in high caps on right, one holds out a cloth.
26. The Empress on horseback holding a scourge, attended by a man, and other ladies on horseback.
27. Three angels blowing trumpets.
28. Emperor (?) on left takes hand of kneeling Empress; two women on right.
29. Figure (perhaps Empress) kneels on island by tree; man in boat on left.
30. Emperor between two attendants; tree (?) on left.
31. Emperor facing right greeted by man on right; attendants on left and right.
32. Angel with scroll, *gaudent angeli*.
33. Empress in centre holding a baby; women on left and right.
34. Two adoring angels.
35. Empress on horseback takes the hand of a man on left; attendants on right.
36. Coronation of the Virgin. She kneels in centre crowned by the Son (on left) and the Father (on right), the Dove above.
37. Emperor seated on left receives a roll or staff from a kneeling man, hat in hand; three other attendants.
38. Angels with organ and psaltery.
39. Two angels with viols.
40. Angel with scroll, *gaudent angeli*.
41. Man on left holds bowl; Empress in centre, one hand on her bosom, the other behind her; two attendants on right.
42. Man in chair; attendant behind him on left; Empress before him with crossed hands; attendant on right.
43. On left, Empress and attendant. On right, man with staff and attendant. He lays a hand on her arm.

44. Empress assisted by a woman in a ship, sets foot on a plank leading to the ship; man with staff (?) behind her on right; a man in the ship on left.
45. Two angels with harps.
46. Emperor on canopied throne on left touches the crown of Empress kneeling on right.
47. Bust of angel.

The bosses which do not concern our story are those numbered 1, 8, 9, 12 to 15, 16, 27, 32, 34, 36, 38, 39, 40, 45 and 47, fifteen in all, leaving thirty-two to be dealt with. As I have said, their order is mere disorder. One is tempted to suppose that the bosses were all sculptured first, and that the workmen fitted them in according to their own convenience. The best I can do is to group the obvious subjects according to the stages of the story to which they belong.

A. *Opening of the tale. Departure and return of the Emperor. First accusation of the Empress. She is taken to the forest.*

To this belong:—

17. Marriage of Emperor and Empress.
37. (?) Emperor receives a message (perhaps to call him away).
2. Emperor and Empress apparently in friendly converse.
3. The brother makes proposals to the Empress.
13. The Emperor bids farewell to the Empress.
26. The Empress ruling in his absence.
19. (?) Return of the Emperor.
42. (?) Trial of the Empress.
6. The Empress led away to the forest.
30. Similar subject.
21. The Empress attacked in the forest.
18. (?) The Empress alone in the forest (or on the island).

B. *The rescue by the Knight. The Empress made nurse. The second false accusation. The island and vision of the Virgin.*

To this I reckon:—

24. (?) Rescue by the Knight.
10. (?) The Empress and the Knight.
23. (?) The Empress brought to the Knight's wife.
- 25, 33. The Empress as nurse.
22. The crime of murdering the child fixed on the Empress.

42. (?) Trial of the Empress.
20. The Empress condemned to be banished.
29. The Empress put on the island.
7. The vision of the Virgin; the Empress picks the leaves.
- 43, 44. Perhaps the Empress taken from the island. Perhaps also 14 belongs to this episode; but I cannot satisfactorily interpret it.

C. *The Empress heals the sick; heals her two accusers; is reconciled to the Emperor.*

4, 11, 35. The Empress healing the sick.

41. She heals the Knight's brother.

5. She heals the Emperor's brother.

Perhaps 28, and certainly 46. Reconciliation of the Emperor and Empress.

For 31 I can find no satisfactory place.

My chief point is thus, I hope, made out. The story, so far as I know, is very seldom represented in Art: indeed, these two portrayals of it at Norwich and at Eton are the only ones known to me. I have not detected it among the Miracles of the Virgin in the Lady Chapel at Ely, nor is it to be seen in the frescoes of the Lady Chapel at Winchester Cathedral.

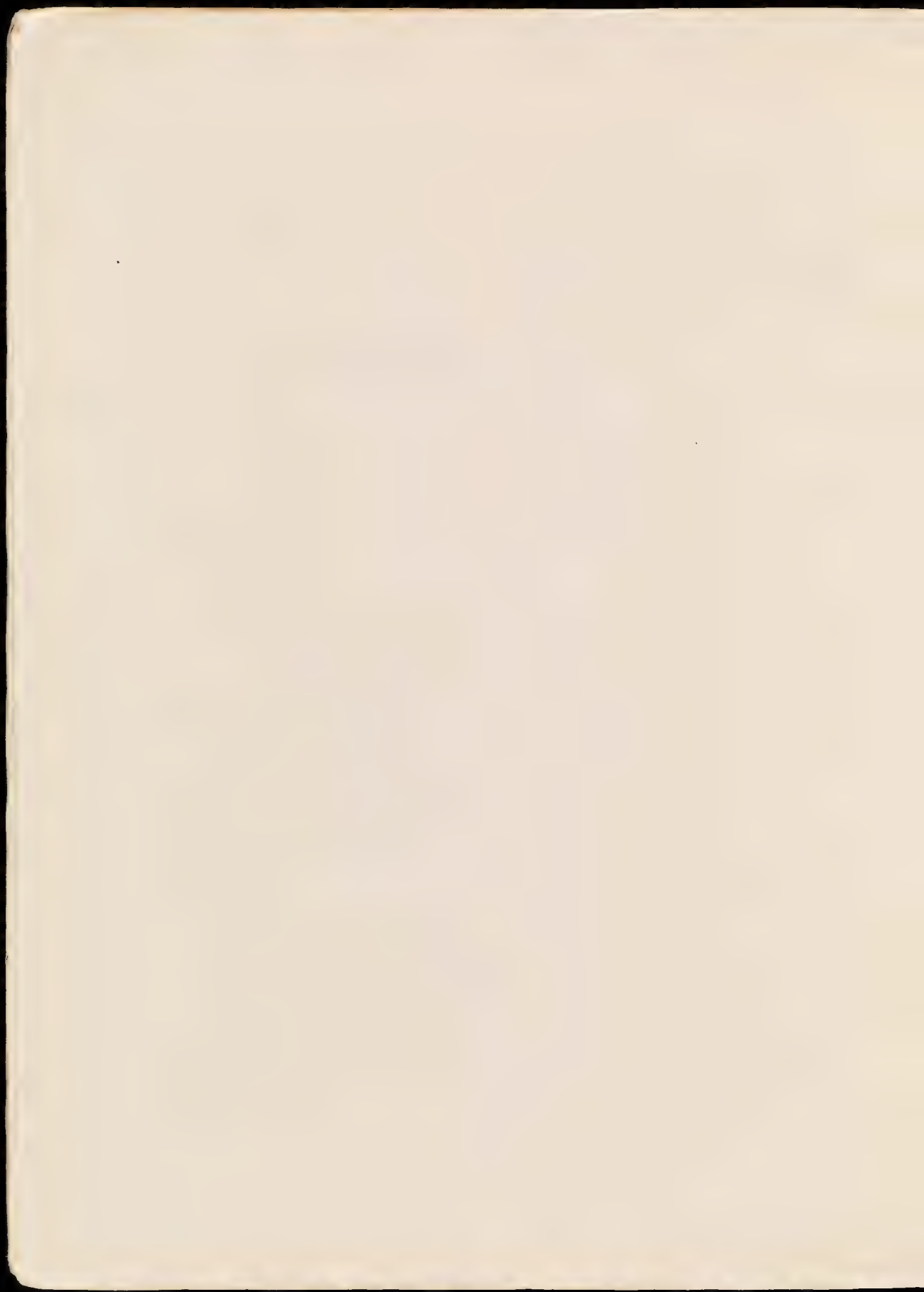
I must complete my notes on the roof of the Bauchun Chapel by a short account, kindly supplied by Dr. Bensly, of the sculptured corbels. There are six of these.

*West wall from south:—*

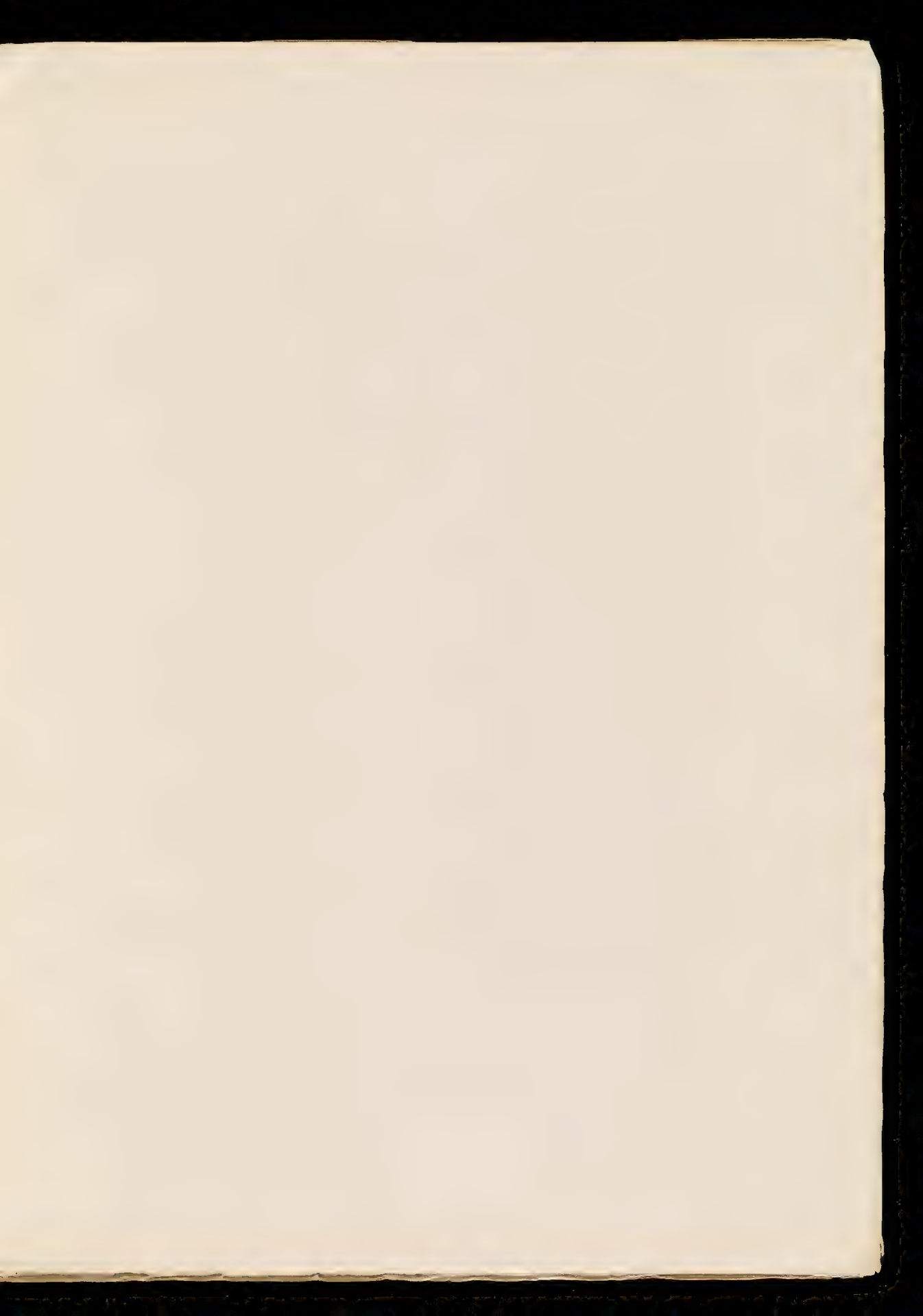
- A. Angel with broken shield, bearing on a bend three chevronels, in chief a mullet (Seguinton).
- B. Half-length of a lawyer, wearing the coif and kneeling at a desk with clasped hands (probably representing William Sekyngton, LL.B., who was a Proctor in the Consistory Court and "Corrector" to Bishop Alnwick. He died in 1460, and by his will directed that his body should be buried in the Chapel of our Lady of Pity).
- C. Angel with scroll, *gaudent angeli*.

*East wall from south:—*

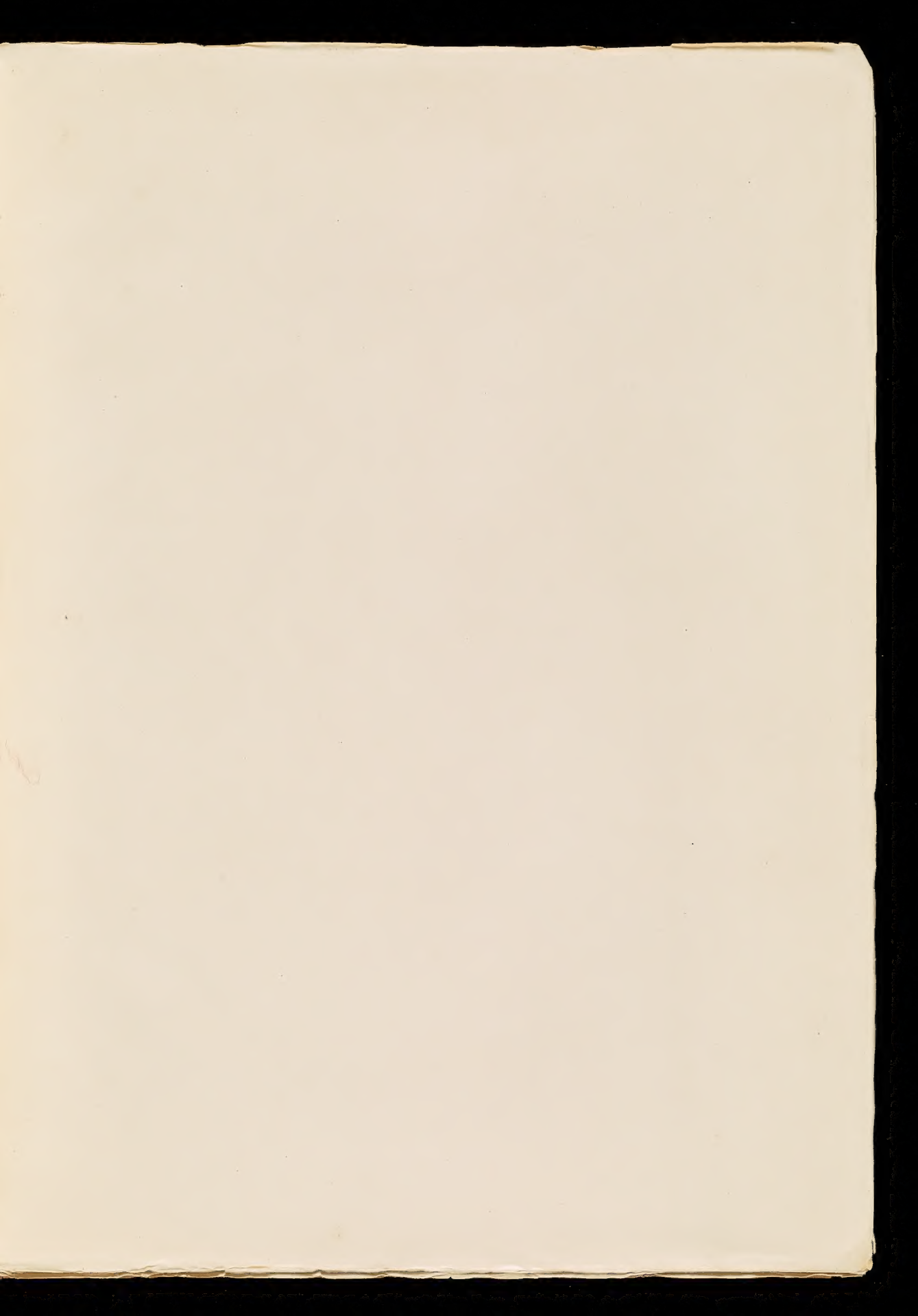
- D. Angel with shield of arms as above.
- E. The Virgin (our Lady of Pity) with the dead body of Christ on her knees, over the site of the altar.
- F. Adoring angel.





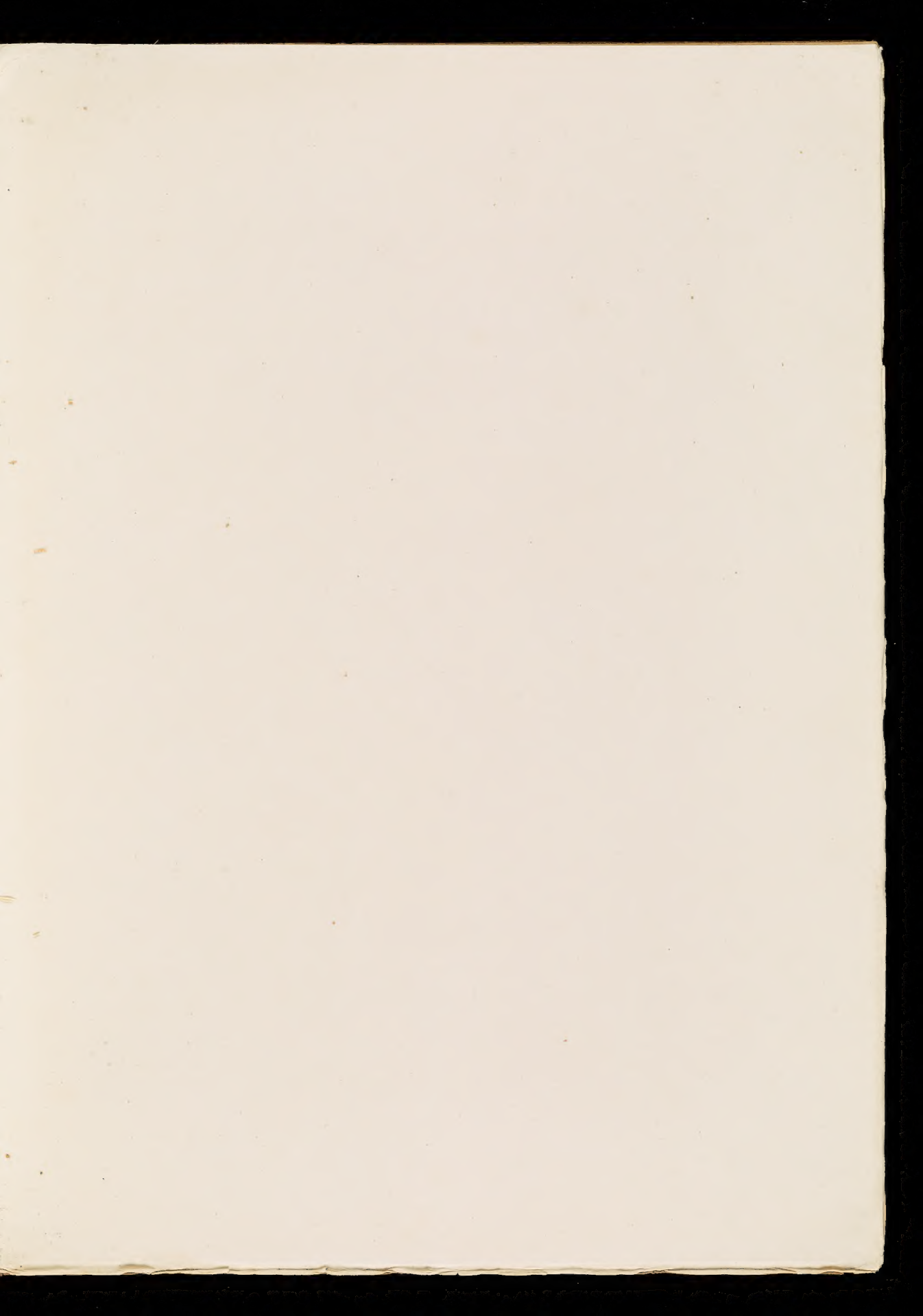






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